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The Range and Limitation of Sub-National Regime Variations under Electoral Authoritarianism: The Case of Russia.

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Introduction

In this study we examine variations in regional political regimes which have developed under Russia's electoral authoritarian system of governance. The Russian Federation is one of the most highly asymmetrical federations in the world and its 85 regions vary widely in the size of their territories and populations, their socio-economic status, and ethnic composition, and thus it is not surprising that their political regimes will also differ in their levels of democracy and authoritarianism.

Our examination of regional regimes focuses on regional assembly elections which are the best indicators of regime type. In contrast to previous studies of regional elections in Russia which have focused on the party list votes or aggregate results, we analyse and compare elections results and levels of electoral contestation in both the party list (PL) and single member district (SMD) contests. The study builds on our earlier analysis of regional elections conducted over the period 2008-12 where we found important cross regional variations in support for the Kremlin's "party of power", United Russia (Panov and Ross 2013).

In 2012, significant changes to electoral and party legislation were adopted in response to anti-government protests, and further important legislative amendments were made in 2014. In this study we compare the results of regional assembly elections in the post-protest electoral cycle of 2013-17 with the

elections which were conducted in the pre-protest cycle of 2008-12, and we examine the impact of the new electoral and party laws on the levels of support for United Russia.

A key question addressed in the study is, to what degree are there stable patterns of electoral contestation and support for United Russia across the two election cycles? Building on the work of Howard and Roessler (2006), we show that there are four sub-national regime types in Russia, which we define as: “hegemonic authoritarian,” “semi-hegemonic authoritarian,” “clearly-competitive authoritarian” and “moderately-competitive authoritarian”. We find that the cross regional variations in the election contests are fairly stable across these two cycles, which suggests that ‘there is a territorial factor at work’ (Keating 2008, 67), and that local politics and political agency need to be taken into account, when analysing electoral politics in Russia.

We begin with a brief review of the main theoretical points important for the study of differentiation of political regimes in multi-level polities and apply them to Russia. This is followed by a detailed account of the changes made to Russia’s electoral and party legislation, and their impact on the party systems at the regional level. Next, we present our empirical data and analyse the level of competitiveness of regional elections across the two election cycles in general, as well as in cross-regional perspective. The conclusion summarizes the study’s main findings.

National and regional politics under electoral authoritarianism

As has been demonstrated by scholars of territorial politics, different levels of a polity may encompass different degrees of contestation, authoritarianism and democracy (Gibson 2005, 2010; Gilley 2010; Giraudi 2015). National level political practices may be more pluralistic than local level politics and vice versa, and there may be “democratic enclaves” in authoritarian regimes and “authoritarian enclaves” in democratic regimes.

We should also stress, that in federal systems, more autonomy at the local level does not necessarily lead to more democracy. As Behrend and Whitehead stress, ‘federalism, can be exploited by undemocratic subnational politicians who are able to claim “boundary control” under federalism’s rules

in order to keep the central government out of “their” strongholds and thwart the development of democracy’ (2016, 155). This has certainly been the case in Russia, where regional elites have more often used their federal powers of sovereignty and political autonomy, to instigate various types of authoritarian regimes, rather than to promote the development of democracy. Moreover, in Russia, it has been those federal subjects which were granted the greatest levels of constitutional autonomy, namely the 21 ethnic republics, which have been able to forge the most authoritarian sub-national regimes (Ross 2002; Panov and Ross 2013).

The variations in regime-types between national and sub-national levels, as well as across sub-national units are facilitated by the development of different forms of electoral authoritarianism in Russia’s regions. These semi-authoritarian regimes, ‘allow multiple parties to compete in elections, but they do so under patently unfair conditions. Incumbents may place barriers on opposition parties’ ability to campaign; generate a progovernment media bias; stack electoral commissions and courts with their supporters; or resort to stuffing boxes and manipulating vote tabulations’ (Donno 2013, 704). According to Schedler, rulers of “electoral authoritarian” regimes, strive ‘to reap the fruits of electoral legitimacy without running the risk of democratic uncertainty’ (2002, 3).

“Electoral authoritarian” regimes may be divided into two different types, “hegemonic” and “competitive” (see Donno 2013). In “competitive authoritarian” regimes, ‘electoral uncertainty exists. The electoral process is manipulated but is not fully controlled by the ruling party whilst opposition parties retain the capacity to occasionally spring surprise victories despite competing on an uneven playing field’ (White 2017). “Hegemonic authoritarian” regimes also hold regular elections, ‘but in addition to widespread violations of political, civil and human rights, the elections are not actually competitive’ (Howard and Roessler 2006). Moreover, ‘because no other party, except the ruling one, is allowed to effectively compete ... the dominant candidate or party wins overwhelmingly, leading to a de facto one-party state’ (ibid). In Russia, electoral authoritarian regimes have been instigated at both the centre and in the regions but there are important variations in the levels of support for United Russia,

and in the degrees of contestation in regional assemblies (see Golosov 2012; Panov and Ross 2013; 2016, 2018; Reisinger and Moraski 2010; White 2016).

Since the inauguration of Vladimir Putin as Russian President in 2000, the regime has waged an attack on the principles and practices of federalism, and there has been a recentralisation by the Kremlin of many of the constitutional powers of the federal subjects, particularly those powers which are shared between the centre and the federal subjects (see Ross 2002, 2011). The Kremlin has attempted to impose a “power vertical”.¹ As a result, relations between the federal government and the regions are not based on the classic federal principles of ‘self-rule and shared rule’. Instead, hierarchy’, ‘centralisation’, and ‘unity’ are the guiding principles of inter-governmental relations. Thus, the Russian Federation may best be defined as a quasi-unitary state.

However, Putin’s centralising policies and “power vertical” sought to bring the regions under central control rather than making them identical. Important variations in the degrees of democracy and authoritarianism are still present at the regional level, and regional elites, particularly in the ethnic republics have been able to carve out significant areas of political autonomy, as long as they keep ethnic tensions at bay and deliver votes to the Kremlin (Panov and Ross 2013, 2016; Saikkonen 2016). As Libman notes, ‘some regions of Russia are characterized by higher levels of political pluralism... and the governor has to recruit the support of multiple elite factions to effectively govern the province’ (2017, 129), whilst in other regions, there is a ‘complete unity of the regional elite under the control of the governor. There is no open or even hidden political competition’, and ‘the governor’s political machine ... is able to deliver the necessary electoral outcomes without much resistance’ (ibid).

As we demonstrate below, the combination of multi-level politics in Russia’s highly asymmetrical federation, with the development of different types of “electoral authoritarianism”, has created a rich and diverse tapestry of sub-national political regimes. Regional elites have used their

¹ The “power vertical” is a concept used by Russian scholars which refers to the attempts by the Putin regime to create a hierarchical and centralised system of executive authority and direct control over the work of the regional governors and policy making in the regions.

federal powers to carve out important areas of political autonomy. Even under Putin's highly centralised system of rule and his 'power vertical', as this study will demonstrate, there are still important regional differences in the levels of political pluralism, contestation and electoral politics.

Changes in Electoral and Party Legislation

Before we turn to our empirical analysis of the elections it is important to present a summary of the key changes to electoral and party legislation. Since Putin came to power in 2000, there have been scores of amendments to election and party legislation in the regions. As Hutcheson notes, over the period 2003-16, the 2001 Law on Political Parties was amended 36 times, and the Federal Law of June 2002, No. 67, on 'Fundamental Guarantees of Electoral Rights' (hereafter, Federal Law 2002), was amended 78 times (2017, 389-90). New electoral and party laws have been adopted at almost every new round of regional elections to ensure Urn's dominance.

Up until 2012 Federal legislation stipulated that elections for regional assemblies could take place in either March or October. In 2012 amendments were made to Federal Law 2002 which stipulated that regional elections were henceforth to be held once in a year. In 2012 they took place in October, and since 2013 they have been held each September. However, there is no single date when all the regional legislatures are re-elected, each legislature has its own term of office.

Federal Law 2002 also stipulated that from 14 July 2003 at least half of the seats in regional assemblies would be contested in a Party List Proportional Representation system (PLPR). Whilst the overwhelming majority introduced a mixed electoral system (with 50% PLPR elections and 50% SMD elections), 10 regions adopted full PLPR systems.² Amendments to electoral legislation in 2013 (see Federal Law No. 303, 2 November 2013), lowered the mandatory minimum percentage of proportional

² In those assemblies where there are an odd number of seats, the number of deputies elected by PLPR is 50%+1. The only exception here is Volgograd Oblast' where 22 deputies are elected by PLPR and 16 by pluralist rule.

representation seats in regional assemblies from 50% to 25%, and the requirement to use proportional representation was lifted completely for Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, only Moscow adopted the new rules and moved to a full plural system with 100% of the deputies elected in single member districts (SMDs). All other regions still use either a mixed or PLPR system.

Generally, a reformation of party-electoral rules is the norm in electoral authoritarian regimes, which usually change the rules to ensure the monopoly of the ruling elite. However, the 2012 round of reforms was of special significance, as it was initiated by a regime in crisis, which many senior politicians feared was in danger of toppling. It has been estimated that between 70 and 120 thousand protestors took part in the largest demonstrations (Shevtsova 2012: 20) against the regime, which took place in Moscow on the 10th and 24th of December 2011, the 4th of February, and the 5th and 10th of March 2012. At a time when the regime appeared weak and was under immense pressure, the leadership felt the need to send a strong signal to the electorate to reassure them that it understood their grievances. Thus, out of desperation the Kremlin pushed through radical changes to electoral and party registration laws in Spring 2012, which made it much easier for parties to register and participate in elections. According to these amendments the number of party members required to be legally registered was drastically reduced from 40,000 to just 500 (Federal Law 28, 2 April, 2012). As a result, the number of parties have risen sharply from 7 in 2011 to 78 in 2017.

Furthermore, some amendments were introduced to electoral legislation. In order to register candidates were required to gather nomination signatures (usually 2% of the regional electorate). However, the changes made in 2012 now stipulated that party list candidates no longer needed to submit nomination signatures, and the maximum number of signatures required by independent candidates was lowered from 2% to 0.5% (see, Federal Law No. 41, 2 May 2012). These developments made it easier for opposition parties to pass the registration hurdles. The average number of registered party lists per region rose from 13.2 in 2012 to 17.2 in September 2013 (Kynev and Lyubarev 2016, 18).

However, after the wave of protests ebbed, and the regime felt more secure, further changes took place in May 2014 which reinstated the requirement of party list candidates to collect nomination

signatures (although the percentage of signatures required was lowered from 2% to 0.5% of the electorate). At the same time, the number of signatures demanded for candidates in the single mandate elections was raised from 0.5 to 3% of the electorate (Federal Law, No. 95, 5 May 2014). In addition, the maximum electoral threshold was lowered from 7 to 5% (Korgunyuk, Ross and Shpagin 2018, 156). However, parties which hold seats in the Duma or receive 3% of the votes in elections to the State Duma are exempt from gathering signatures (Ibid). This meant that the four Duma parliamentary parties United Russia (UR), the Communist Party of the Russian Federation CPRF), the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), and Just Russia (JR) qualified for the subsequent elections by default.

In addition, parties which hold seats in, or win 3% of the votes in regional assemblies, or 0.5% of the total number of seats in a region's municipal councils, are exempt from submitting signatures in those particular regions, and this has allowed a number of opposition parties, to compete in a few regions without submitting signatures (Korgunyuk, Ross and Shpagin 2018, 156). The reinstatement of the need to gather nomination signatures in 2014 resulted in a sharp fall in the average number of party lists which were registered for regional assembly elections, from 17.2 in 2013 to 7.8 in 2015, 6.9 in 2016 and 7.7 in 2017 (Kynev, Lyubarev and Maksimov 2017, 5).

These new electoral and party laws have created a specific type of party system in Russian regions. First of all, it is important to stress that the party system is built around UR which wins a majority of seats in all regional legislatures. Second, there have been three "second order" parties, the so-called "parliamentary opposition" that regularly participate in almost all of the regional assembly elections (and usually win some seats) - CPRF, LDPR and JR. Third, there are some small opposition parties such as the Patriots of Russia, Yabloko and so forth, that sometimes win seats in regional assemblies. In the framework of the very strict rules governing party registration, the number of small parties had steadily fallen over the second half of the 2000s. Whilst there were 13 parties registered at the end of 2007, their number fell to 7 in 2011. As noted above, the 2012 legislation relaxed the rules governing the registration of parties and this led to a sharp increase in their numbers from 33 in 2012 to 78 in 2017. In 2015, 48 parties took part in the regional elections, in 2016 there were 55 parties and 28

in 2017. However, as is demonstrated in the data below, none of these newly created parties won more than a handful of seats in the regional elections. Thus, despite the large increase in the number of parties registered, the regional assemblies continue to be dominated by United Russia and the three “second order” parties.

Falling Rates of Turnout

However, whilst United Russia continues to dominate the regional assemblies, one factor which is potentially worrying for the regime is the decline in the levels of turnout which, if this trend continues, may gradually lead to an erosion of the legitimacy of the party. Whilst United Russia has been successful in mobilising the electorate in the “hegemonic authoritarian” regions, where over 70% of the electorate regularly turnout to vote, in other regions citizen participation is much lower. Thus, for example, as Lyubarev (2017, 6) notes, in a majority of the elections which took place over the period 2012-15 (not counting those which took place at the same time as the Presidential elections in March 2012), turnout was lower than in the previous elections: in 8 regions the level of citizen participation dropped by more than 10% (see Panov and Ross, 2016). In the most recent round of elections which took place in 2017 the average turnout dropped from 42.3% in 2012 to 34.7%. We should also stress that in those regions where turnout is much higher than the average (for example, 92% in Chechnya in 2013) this is often an indicator that they have been fraudulent. In many cases there is a correlation between high turnout and higher than average votes for United Russia which suggests that additional ballot papers have been artificially manufactured in support of the Kremlin’s party (see Panov and Ross, 2016).

Two Cycles of Regional Assembly Elections

We examine two cycles of regional assembly elections in 83 of Russia’s 85 regions.³ In the first cycle (2008-12), only 10 regions adopted full PLPR systems, which included the 5 Caucasian republics of

³ We exclude Crimea and Sevastopol’ as they became de-facto parts of the Russian Federation only in 2014 and were therefore absent in the first cycle. In the first cycle 2008-2012, due to the fact, that some regional legislatures had four-year terms of office, in some regions elections were held twice;

Dagestan, Ingushetiya, Kabardino-Balkariya, Kalmykiya and Chechnya, in addition to, the Nenets AO; Amur, Kaluga, and Tula oblasts, and the city of St. Petersburg. However, only the Caucasian republics maintained a full PLPR system in the second cycle (2013-17), whereas 5 other regions moved from a full PLPR to a mixed system. Additionally, two other republics (Karachaevo-Cherkessiya and North Ossetiya) transferred from a mixed to a full PLPR system. In sum, taking into account the fact that Moscow adopted a plural SMD system in the second cycle, we have 70 regions which used a mix electoral system in both cycles, 5 which adopted a full PLPR system in both cycles, and 8 regions which moved from one system to another.

Although the PLPR and SMD types of elections will influence each other, due to the so called ‘contamination effects’ (Moser and Scheiner 2004; Herron and Nishikawa 2001), what we have in essence are two different electoral races. Thus, we would expect to see differences in the levels of contestation and in the results of the PLPR and SMD elections.

The Competitiveness of Party List Elections

To measure the degree of competitiveness in the PLPR part of the electoral system, we employ the “effective number of parties (ENP)” indicator. Initially this was proposed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979). However, as many scholars have argued, Laakso and Taagepera’s ENP has some disadvantages, particularly for the measurement of party systems with a dominant party (such as Russia), since their method overemphasizes the weight of minor parties (Golosov 2010; Molinar 2001). In order to eliminate this disadvantage, Golosov proposed a different formula for calculating the ENP. The values of the

and we take the latest elections. In Buryatiya and Smolensk oblast’ there were no elections over the period of 2008-2012, as the terms of office of these regional assemblies were extended to 2013, therefore for these regions we include the elections which took place in December 2007.

effective number of parties in all regional legislatures, which we calculated using Golosov's methodology (ENP_{gol}), are presented in Table 1.⁴

[Table 1 about here]

As can be seen in Table 2, in the first cycle, the average value of the ENP_{gol} was 2.193. This score accords with a very common scenario, whereby United Russia as the dominant party wins approximately half of the votes and commands a stable majority in each regional assembly. The other half of the votes were picked up by the “second order” parties - CPRF, LDPR and JR. In addition, 4 minor parties (Agrarian, Yabloko, Patriots, and Right Cause) won seats in just 13 regions: in total, they gained only 48 seats in the PLPR part of the elections.

[Table 2 about here]

For the second electoral cycle, the general picture did not substantially change. UR continued to dominate all the regional elections. Indeed, the number of seats won by UR even increased from 1346 to 1403. As previously, the parties of the “second order” gained some seats in most regional assemblies. In spite of the fact that the number of minor parties increased hugely in the second cycle, their results were almost the same as in the first cycle - 44 seats. As a result, the average value of the ENP_{gol} even decreased to 2.027 in the second cycle of elections.

The Competitiveness of Single Member District Elections

Since some regions use a full PLPR system, they are excluded from the analysis. Also, we exclude all of the multi-members districts (MMDs) which were used in some cases in 6 regions including Chukotka, where only MMDs are used instead of SMDs. As a result, we have 72 regions with SMDs in

⁴ In calculating the ENP_{gol}, we take into account the results (shares of votes) of United Russia, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, and Just Russia. The results of minor parties are taken into account only in those cases where they overcome the electoral threshold.

the first cycle and 75 – in the second. The total number of SMDs in each cycle is thus, 1740 and 1766 respectively.

The very large number of SMDs makes it problematic to use the same indicator (ENPgol) which we employed to measure the PLPR campaigns. Besides, it seems to be unnecessary, as the pattern of contestation in the majoritarian SMDs are so different from those in PLPR elections that to conduct such a comparison would clearly not yield very meaningful results. Thus, we need to find another type of measurement. A great deal of scholarly literature has been devoted to the measurement of the degree of competitiveness in SMDs. Generally, it is possible to distinguish two main approaches (Burshard 2013, 115-116). The first employs a “margin of victory indicator.” If the margin is equal to or more than a specific figure (which has been calculated as between 10 to 20 per cent by different scholars), the elections are considered as non-competitive. The second is based on the vote share of the winner. If the candidate wins above a certain per cent of the votes (defined as 55 or 60 per cent), the elections are considered as non-competitive.

Both of these methods correlate very well with one other and have their own advantages. For that reason, we combine the key elements of each and develop a modified version of measurement. We surmise that the levels of competition in the SMDs will differ in important respects as regard levels of fragmentation. In the case of fragmented competition, when votes are shared between many candidates, more than 50% of votes for the winner would appear to be high enough to recognize the elections as non-competitive. An electoral campaign is considered to be fragmented if more than two candidates receive more than 10% of the votes, which would mean that the margin of victory was at least 20%. In the case of a polarized campaign, 50% and over is not high enough, as the runner up may gain a share close to 50%. Therefore, for polarized elections the threshold of competitiveness should be 60% (here the margin of victory indicator would be 20% or more).

In accordance with these criteria, each of the SMDs was examined and defined as either competitive or non-competitive. Next, we counted the share of non-competitive SMDs in each regional

assembly election. The values of this index are presented in Table 1⁵ and the general results in Table 3. They confirm the well-known finding that UR always fares much better in the SMDs than the PLPR system. In the first cycle, UR candidates won 84.7% of the SMDs, while in the PLPR part – they gained 60.5% of the seats; in the second cycle – they fared even better in the SMDs winning 90% in comparison to the 66.7% of the mandates in the PLPR races.

The main reasons for URs greater success in the SMDs are as follows: elections in SMDs are based much more on the personal attributes of the candidates, and UR has much more authoritative and popular politicians than any of the other parties. UR would clearly benefit if the party list were abolished outright as it fares so much better in the SMD races. However, UR has other reasons for maintaining the PLPR system: politicians elected in the SMDs tend to be less loyal to the party than those elected in the party lists, and UR needs to use the PLPR elections to promote some candidates with poor electoral ratings (who would fail to be elected in the SMDs). As has been demonstrated, UR also engages in the practice of co-opting candidates from other opposition parties (see Reuter and Turovsky 2014; Turovsky 2015).

[Table 3 about here]

As regards the level of competitiveness of the SMD races, we find that approximately half of the SMDs are non-competitive (0.46 and 0.44 in the first and the second cycles respectively). It is noticeable that the shares of non-competitive SMDs, in which UR candidates won, were slightly higher than the general share of non-competitive SMDs in both cycles, whereas the shares of non-competitive SMDs, in which UR candidates lost, were much less – 0.09 and 0.11 respectively. Consequently, non-competitive elections in the races, where UR candidates were defeated, are fairly unusual cases. At the same time, we have a large number of SMDs where UR did not nominate its own candidates – 60 in the first cycle and 78 in the second. This phenomenon is mostly explained by the fact that in the process of

⁵ For North Ossetiya, which was the only region to employ a two-round majority system in the SMDs (in the first cycle), we rely on the results of the first round.

inter-elite bargaining, UR reserved some SMDs for other parties or, more frequently, for those non-party candidates, which are influential and resourceful but for some reasons remain outside the party. That is why one can see that the shares of non-competitive SMDs without UR candidates are closer to the shares of non-competitive SMDs, where UR candidates won – 0.43 and 0.36. It is no accident that after elections many non-party candidates enter UR or at least UR's parliamentary faction (for a detailed analysis of the subsequent trajectory of non-party candidates in the first cycle, see (Panov and Ross, 2013)).

Hence, similar to the PLPR part of the electoral system, the general level of competitiveness has not significantly changed in the second electoral cycle in comparison to the first. The share of non-competitive SMDs remains almost the same, no matter which aspect we consider: all SMDs, or districts won or lost by UR candidates, or districts without UR candidates. Consequently, the party and electoral reforms did not have a significant influence on the level of competitiveness of regional elections. Many of the new parties which emerged in the period 2012-17 were bogus or spoiler parties which were deliberately created to split the votes of the opposition, whilst many of the others, which were “created from above”, had low levels of party institutionalisation, very poor territorial structures and finance, and little grassroots support.

Nevertheless, it has to be noted, that although the party reforms did not have much impact on the election results, they did influence the electoral strategies of the politicians. Since the range of parties expanded significantly, and nomination from parties was made easier, many candidates preferred to stand on a party platform rather than be nominated as non-party independents. As a result, the number of non-party winners in SMDs decreased from 126 to 83; moreover, while in the first cycle, the number of non-party candidates was close to 20%, in the second cycle, it fell to 7.5%.⁶

⁶ Calculated from information provided on the Russian Central Electoral Commission Website (<http://www.cikf.ru>).

Cross-Regional Variations in Competitiveness of Elections: Are There Stable Patterns?

When we proceed to individual regional data, we find substantial cross-regional variations in the level of competitiveness in both cycles. Thus, the values of ENPgol ranged from 1.09 to 3.84 in the first, and from 1.11 to 3.47 in the second cycle. The share of non-competitive SMDs ranged from “0” to “1” in both electoral cycles. In order to examine cross-regional variations in detail, we placed the values of the two indexes (ENPgol and Share of Non-Competitive SMDs) on the planes (scatter diagrams) presented in Figure 1 (1st cycle) and Figure 2 (2nd cycle). The numbering of the regions is the same as in Table 1.⁷ The vertical lines divide the planes into three sections according to the values of ENPgol which were 2.00 and 3.00. In the 2nd cycle we moved the second line from the value of 3 to 2.7 for reasons that are explained below. These are conditional values which help us to separate: a) clearly non-competitive regions located to the left of the line that passes through the value 2.00; b) clearly competitive regions located to the right of the line that passes through the value 3.00. For the same purpose we drew some horizontal lines which pass through the values of the share of non-competitive SMDs as 0.7, 0.5, and 0.3.

[Figure 1 about here]

[Figure 2 about here]

As a result, it is possible to distinguish four contrasting groups of regions, based on the competitiveness of their assembly elections. We find that more than half of the regions occur in the same group (or very close to the group) in both cycles (see Table 4). These results suggest that what we are witnessing in these regions is a fairly stable pattern of electoral contestation. Consequently, these regions can be interpreted not only quantitatively, but qualitatively as corresponding to the criteria of one of the four sub-national regime types in Russia, which we define as: “hegemonic authoritarian,” “clearly-

⁷ It has to be noted, that we had to omit those regions which used only PLPR system, Moscow where there were only SMDs in the second cycle, and Chukotka that used MMDs.

competitive authoritarian”, “semi-hegemonic authoritarian,” and “moderately-competitive authoritarian”.

[Table 4 about here]

Hegemonic-authoritarian regions. The first group is located in the upper left corner of the planes – in the area where there is an almost complete lack of competition in both the PLPR and SMDs. In these regimes, a dominant actor, usually a governor is able to dominate the electoral field by controlling the nomination of candidates, and the organization of the electoral campaigns. As a result, in PLPR voting, UR wins an extraordinary high share of votes, comprising 70% and more. In SMDs, only candidates who have the backing of the authorities have any chance of winning elections. It should also be stressed that the position of all these regions on the planes are above the approximation line. In other words, the degree of competitiveness in the SMDs is even lower than in the PLPR races (if it is possible to talk about competitiveness at all in this group).

Clearly competitive-authoritarian regions. The second group is located in the lower right corner of the planes – in the area of fairly high electoral competition in both the PLPR and SMDs. In the PLPR system, UR gains approximately 30-40% of votes. Although this percentage of the votes allows UR to gain an overall majority in the regional assemblies (due to the impact of the electoral threshold and the method of translating the percentage of votes into seats, and also the fact that UR candidates win the elections in most of the SMDs), but here they compete in a genuine struggle for power, and their victories are not predetermined as was the case with the regions in the first group. In the first cycle the group of 10 regions is clearly separated in figure 1 by the intersection of the vertical line that passes through the value of ENPgol “3.0” and the horizontal line that passes through the value of the share of non-competitive SMDs “0.3”. However, it should be stressed that almost all the elections in this group (Kirov is the only exception) were held in December 2011, when the surge of anti-UR voting was at its peak. During the second cycle, anti-UR sentiments were not so high. That is why we found it necessary to move the vertical line from the value of 3 to 2.7 in the second cycle in order to ensure a more comparative distribution of the values of the indices.

Whereas the regions of the first and second groups demonstrate a fairly high-level of correlation between their levels of competitiveness in the PLPR system and SMDs⁸, there are some regions where there is no correlation. In this regard, it is possible to distinguish two special groups of regions, which are presented in the figures as the third and the fourth groups.

Semi-hegemonic authoritarian regions. The regions of the third group demonstrate a relatively high level of competitiveness in the PLPR contests, i.e., the values of ENPgol are between 2.0 and 3.0 (2.7 for the second cycle), and low competitiveness in the SMDs (more than half of the SMDs are non-competitive). There are not many regions in this group: 7 in the first and only 4 in the second cycle. Nevertheless, two regions - Kursk (37) and Stavropol (65) – appeared in the group in both cycles. This pattern can be interpreted as follows. In some respects, the third group is similar to the first one, but in contrast to the “hegemonic authoritarian pattern”, the regional ruling elite is not able to attain total control over the political realm. In these regions UR usually gains 40-50% of the votes, which guarantees them a majority of the seats in the regional assemblies, but it is not the same level of “hegemony” which they achieve in the first group. At the same time, the regional ruling elite is able to coordinate its actions, sometimes bargain successfully, and it is able to distribute the SMDs between a number of groups so as to avoid having to engage in an open struggle for seats. In some SMDs UR deliberately did not nominate its candidates, allowing members of other parties to win seats, which are subsequently co-opted into the regional elite.

Moderately-competitive authoritarian regions. The fourth group includes those regions which display the same level of competitiveness in the PLPR races as the third group, but which exhibit fairly high competitive races in the SMDs (less than one third of the SMDs are non-competitive). As in the previous group, UR gains approximately 40-50% of votes. In other words, these regions do not demonstrate strong pro-opposition sentiments as was the case concerning the “clearly-competitive

⁸ This is the reason of high values correlation coefficients between ENPgol and Share of Non-Competitive SMDs (they are statistically significant and take the values of “-0.803” and “-0.788”).

authoritarian” regions. Nevertheless, the fourth group of regions is likely to be closer to the second, rather than the third group, which is due to the fact that, whilst the regional elites here are able to consolidate and achieve fairly high results for UR in the PLPR part of elections, they have not been able to overcome intra-elite conflicts in the SMDs. As a consequence, more than two thirds of the districts here experienced competitive elections.

The remaining regions are located between these four groups on the planes, or they fluctuate from one group to another. At the same time, it has to be stressed, that such “migrations” of regions, i.e., changes in their level of competitiveness (in both parts of the electoral system) are not substantial in most of the cases. As a rule, a region, which was in a particular group in one cycle, tends to remain in that group or does not move far, across the cycle.

We find only six cases when a region changed groups. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that not all changes will have the same importance. Thus, moving from the 1st to the 3rd group and vice versa, as well as from the 4th to the 2nd group and vice versa, are not so important as moving between the 1st and the 2nd or the 2nd and 3rd groups, due to the relative similarity between the 1st and 3rd groups, and between the 2nd and 4th groups.

Therefore, we would not interpret the cases of Ryazan and Magadan, which moved from the 3rd to the 1st group), and Moscow Oblast (moved from the 4th to the 2nd) as something extraordinary. Irkutsk, which moved from the 3rd to the 4th group due to an increase in the level of competitiveness in the SMDs in the 2013 elections, is a more interesting case. However, the most fascinating cases are Moscow, which moved from the 1st to the 2nd group, and Leningrad Oblast which moved in the opposite direction, from the 2nd to the 3rd group.

Factors which Influence Cross-Regional Variations

The success of authoritarian elections, which are designed to guarantee the power of the ruling elite, is determined by the ability of regional elites to mobilize the electorate in support of the “party of power” (UR) and its candidates. The more effective the electoral mobilization, the less competitive will be the elections. The effectiveness of electoral mobilization depends on two main groups of factors –

“structural” and “agency”. “Structural factors” concern the presence of favourable social conditions, which enable the regional ruling elite to gain control over voting behaviour. As it has been demonstrated in the literature (see, for example: Magaloni 2006), the most favourable environments for electoral mobilization are those constituencies which are dominated by poorer voters, who are more sensitive to electoral mobilization, as well as rural settlements where citizens are bound together in tight social networks. The other powerful type of tight social network is based on ethnic ties; and it has been argued that non-Russian ethnic groups are more inclined to maintain stronger traditional (“primordial”) ties to their ethnic communities than is the case for ethnic Russians (Moraski and Reisinger, 2003; White 2015). A favourable setting for political mobilization is a necessary but not a sufficient condition, for electoral mobilization. The second factor (“agency”) governing the success of electoral mobilization is mobilization capability. Ruling elites should be able to create effective political machines, i.e., political organizations that mobilize electoral support (Stokes 2000; Golosov 2013).

In their combination, structural and agency factors are expected to explain why the regions demonstrate different patterns of political competitiveness. Nevertheless, the question arises which group of factors is more important. In order to test the significance of structural factors we conducted a regression analysis (OLS regression), including in the equation some basic “structural” features of the regions as independent variables:

- 1) *Russians*: Share of ethnic Russians in the population of a region (*Vserossiiskaya Perepis' Naseleniya 2010*) is expected to increase competitiveness;
- 2) *Urban*: Share of urban dwellers in the population of a region (*Regiony Rossii: Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie Pokazateli 2016*, Table 2.3), is expected to increase competitiveness
- 3) *Poverty*: Share of the population with incomes below the subsistence minimum (*Regiony Rossii: Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie Pokazateli 2016*, Table 4.16), is expected to increase competitiveness.

We develop a number of models with different dependent variables: (1) *ENP* as an average of the values of *ENPgol* in both cycles; (2) *CompSMD* as an average of the values of the shares of

competitive SMDs in a region. In order to combine the two parts of the elections, we also calculate (3) $ENP*ComSMD$ as a result of multiplying the value of ENP by the value of CompSMD. These variables should be considered as approximations, as the positions of the regions are defined by their location on the planes, which cannot be measured directly, at least on the interval level.

[Table 5 about here]

The results of the regressions are presented in table 5 which demonstrates that the only variable that has stable and statistically significant coefficients, is the share of ethnic *Russians*. Thus, we can conclude that the ethnic composition of the regions is an important structural factor which helps to explain sub-national variations in Russia, whilst the other structural features of the regions are not significant. Although the values of the coefficients of the share of the *Urban* population have a positive sign, they are statistically insignificant in all the equations. This means that rural settlements, as such, are not favourable environments for electoral mobilization to the degree that was expected. This is explained by the fact that, as Frye, Reuter and Szakonyi have demonstrated, the key site of political mobilization in Russia is the workplace; and employers are especially well placed to translate their economic power over workers into political mobilization (2016). Therefore, it is not so important whether the workplace is located in rural or urban districts. Finally, in contrast to our expectations, the level of poverty has a positive sign, although the coefficients are statistically insignificant in two of the cases out of three. This conclusion is also backed up by the findings of Frye, Reuter Szakonyi (Ibid). Since electoral mobilization is carried out in the workplace, it is based much more on administrative pressure, than on vote-buying, so that wealthier employees are more sensitive to mobilization.

Nevertheless, the values of R-square and, consequently the explanatory power of all these regression models are not very high. As our in-depth analysis demonstrates, many of the regions are outliers which deviate for the regression line to a great extent. Among the highest (most deviant) outliers is, for instance, Altay Republic, which we would expect to be among the “hegemonic authoritarian” regions, but which in fact, demonstrates a moderate level of competitiveness. On the other hand, such

Russian, urban and industrial regions as Kemerovo, Rostov, Saratov, Krasnodar etc. are unexpectedly much closer to the model of “hegemonic authoritarianism”.

When we excluded the highest outliers (8 cases) and created three other regression models (4-5-6), the general significance of the models, as well as the separate coefficients for each of the variables, markedly improved. Consequently, we can conclude that structural factors matter but we should not overemphasize their importance. In many cases, the potential for electoral mobilization is not fully realized, even when the structural conditions are positive, due to the relatively weak political machines of the regional leaders. And on the contrary, strong authoritarian leaders are able to gain control over regional politics, even when the structural features are weak. Also, it is noticeable that the values of R-square in the models with *CompSMD* (2 and 5) are much lower than with ENP (1 and 4), which demonstrates that agency factors are especially important for the SMD races. In these elections, reducing the levels of competitiveness will depend much more on the ability of regional leaders to ensure elite cohesion over the bargaining and allocation of seats, than is the case in the party list races.

The significance of agency factors is clearly demonstrated by the fact, that there are some cases when one region moved from one group to another between the two electoral cycles. Moscow is the most exemplary case which demonstrates that regional politics can be transformed substantially over a short period. In the first cycle, Moscow was in the first group because, as it is well known, under Luzhkov’s mayorship, a strong political machine was forged which guaranteed the hegemonic domination of one political actor, who was able to deliver the votes for the Kremlin, despite the traditionally high levels of opposition sentiments to be found in the capital. After the resignation of Luzhkov, his political machine was broken-up, and Moscow elections began to reflect more accurately the opinions of the city’s electorate. However, clearly the Kremlin cannot lose political control of the capital, therefore its candidates won both the mayoral and the city council elections in 2014. In the council elections UR won a majority of the seats (28 of the 45), however only 10 of the 45 SMDs were non-competitive in the 2014 elections. For comparison, in the previous elections in 2009, UR won all 17 of the SMDs, and non-competitive elections were held in 14 of them.

We should also note that over the period 2010-11, some other cases of replacement of very resourceful and strong authoritarian heads took place, but the consequences of these changes varied. Two well-known large and wealthy republics - Tatarstan and Bashkortostan – are of special interest. In Tatarstan, the new leader Minnikhanov was the “hand-picked successor” of the previous incumbent, Shaymiev, who managed to persuade the Kremlin to replace him with a loyal lieutenant. As a result, the Tatarstan elite was able to protect its own position and preserve the political machine founded by Shaymiev. Therefore, the republic remains in the group of stable “hegemonic authoritarian” regions. On the other hand, although, as noted above, we placed Bashkortostan in the first group, the degree of competitiveness significantly increased in both the PLPR and SMDs after the leadership succession. In 2008, under the leadership of President Rakhimov, the value of ENPgol was one of the lowest in Russia (1.17), and more than 90% of the SMDs were non-competitive, and Bashkortostan was therefore placed firmly “in the core” of the “hegemonic authoritarian” group (see on the Figure 1). However, in contrast to Shaymiev, Rakhimov did not manage to strike a deal with the Kremlin, over his successor, and the new head Khamitov, who is not from Rakhimov’s group, was unable to inherit the political machine created by his predecessor. Nonetheless, it is certainly the case that Bashkortostan continues to demonstrate loyalty to the Kremlin and UR. Moreover, the traditional ethnic ties, which were one of the foundations of Rakhimov’s politics, is still important, therefore in the 2013 regional elections, the value of ENPgol increased insignificantly (1.28). In this sense, Bashkortostan is clearly different from Moscow. However, the republican elite is not as consolidated and powerful as it was during the time of Rakhimov, and consequently, in 2013, one third of the SMDs experienced competitive elections.

Conclusion

The key conclusions of this study are as follows:

1) There are considerable differences in the level of competitiveness and support for UR in the PLPR and SMD races. United Russia always fares much better in the SMDs. However, the Kremlin’s “party of power” is interested in the PLPR part of the electoral system because it guarantees the loyalty of the

deputies to the party. In addition, the PLPR elections enable UR to bargain with, and co-opt prominent members of other opposition parties, and members of elite groups in the regional assemblies;

2) The impact of party and electoral reforms on the level of competitiveness in regional assembly elections has been shown to be insignificant. In the framework of electoral authoritarianism, Russian parties are primarily tools which are used for bargaining between elites rather than genuine political actors which seek representation in political institutions. Even after the sharp increase in the number of parties registered in the second cycle and the rise in the number of parties participating in the elections, UR continued to dominate the membership of all of the regional assemblies and, as in the first cycle, only the three second order parties (CPRF, LDPR and JR) were able to garner sizeable percentages of the votes. The other minor parties made up no more than 2% of the seats in both cycles;

3) Whilst the average results for UR in each round of elections shows that the party dominates the membership of Russia's regional assemblies, a closer level analysis which takes into account the differences between the PLPR and SMD elections provides us with a more nuanced picture of sub-national politics. Our study reveals important variations in the types of "electoral authoritarianism" which operate at the sub-national level which have not been uncovered in previous studies which have focused only on the party list elections or aggregate results.

We show that, approximately half of the regions demonstrate stable electoral patterns across both cycles and can be placed in one of the following four groups; "hegemonic authoritarian" (19 regions), "semi-hegemonic authoritarian" (2 regions), "clearly-competitive authoritarian" (9 regions), and "moderately-competitive authoritarian" (14 regions). The remaining regions are located between these four groups, or they fluctuate from one group to another.

These results, demonstrate that even in Putin's quasi federal state where power has been highly centralised, territory and local politics still matter, and alongside other structural factors, help to shape electoral outcomes. In those regions which we may define as "competitive authoritarian" we find higher levels of political pluralism and political contestation whilst in those which we define as "hegemonic authoritarian" there is far less electoral genuine competition and the party of power totally dominates

the political landscape. At the same time, there are strict limits to the amount of contestation that is permitted. Even in those regions, where the “clearly-competitive authoritarian” pattern of elections is reproduced, the level of competitiveness is qualified by the simple fact, that UR must always be guaranteed a majority of the seats in the regional assemblies.

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Table 1. Regional assembly elections: electoral systems and competitiveness

	The 1 st cycle					The 2 nd cycle				
	Date of elections	Number of deputies	Electoral System: PLPR /SMDs	ENP _{gol}	Share of Non-Comp. SMDs	Date of elections	Number of deputies	Electoral System: PLPR /SMDs	ENP _{gol}	Share of Non-Comp. SMDs
1. Adygeya	2011.03	54	27/27	1.8515	0.5556	2016	50	25/25	1.8074	0.5200
2. Altay krai	2011.12	68	34/34	2.8336	0.2059	2016	68	34/34	3.1627	0.0882
3. Altay rep.	2010.03	21	21/20	2.5205	0.1500	2014	21	21/20	2.2015	0.1000
4. Amur	2011.12	36	36/0	2.4677		2016	36	18/18	2.8238	0.1111
5. Archangelsk	2009.03	62	31/31	2.1164	0.4194	2013	62	31/31	2.5945	0.2258
6. Astrakhan	2011.12	58	29/29	2.0653	0.7241	2016	58	29/29	2.6072	0.3448
7. Bashkortostan	2008.03	120	60/60	1.1696	0.9167	2013	110	55/55	1.2778	0.6727
8. Belgorod	2010.10	35	18/17	1.5516	0.8235	2015	50	25/25	1.5871	0.6000
9. Bryansk	2009.03	60	30/30	2.0060	0.4333	2014	60	30/30	1.2968	0.8000
10. Buryatiya	2007.12	66	33/33	1.6726	0.2813	2013	66	33/33	2.1475	0.1818
11. Chechnya	2008.10	41	41/0	1.1129		2016	41	41/0	1.1334	
12. Chelyabinsk	2010.10	60	30/30	1.8530	0.7333	2015	60	30/30	1.8814	0.5657
13. Chukotka	2011.03	12	6/0*	1.4124		2016	15	9/0*	1.6826	
14. Chuvashiya	2011.12	44	22/22	2.4513	0.2727	2016	44	22/22	2.0707	0.3636
15. Dagestan	2011.03	90	90/0	1.6751		2016	90	90/0	1.3085	
16. Ingushetiya	2011.12	27	27/0	1.3183		2016	32	32/0	1.2848	
17. Irkutsk	2008.10	50	25/21*	2.0107	0.5238	2013	45	23/22	2.4885	0.2273
18. Ivanovo	2008.03	48	24/24	1.7309	0.1250	2013	26	13/13	1.6453	0.3846
19. Jewish AO	2011.12	19	10/9	2.2203	0.2222	2016	19	10/9	2.5516	0.4444
20. Kabardino-Balkariya	2009.03	72	72/0	1.4535		2014	70	70/0	1.6505	
21. Kaliningrad	2011.03	40	20/20	2.8356	0.2000	2016	40	20/20	2.6447	0.1500
22. Kalmykiya	2008.03	27	27/0	1.9452		2013	27	27/0	1.8197	
23. Kaluga	2010.03	40	40/0	2.0047		2015	40	20/20	1.6818	0.4500
24. Kamchatka	2011.12	28	14/14	2.4216	0.2143	2016	28	14/14	2.2133	0.2857
25. Karachaevo-Cherkessiya	2009.03	73	37/36	1.5142	0.7222	2014	50	50/0	1.4424	
26. Kareliya	2011.12	50	25/25	3.8384	0.1600	2016	36	18/18	3.4748	0.0556
27. Kemerovo	2008.10	36	18/18	1.1786	1.0000	2013	46	23/23	1.1087	1.0000
28. Khabarovsk	2010.03	26	13/13	2.3150	0.0000	2014	36	18/18	1.7362	0.4444
29. Khakasiya	2009.03	75	38/37	1.9322	0.5676	2013	50	25/25	2.2864	0.1200
30. Khanty-Mansi AO	2011.03	35	18/14*	2.5033	0.2857	2016	38	19/19	2.2515	0.3684
31. Kirov	2011.03	54	27/27	3.0448	0.1154	2016	54	27/27	2.9422	0.2222
32. Komi	2011.03	30	15/15	2.1454	0.2667	2015	30	15/15	1.6808	0.4667
33. Kostroma	2010.10	36	18/8	2.2181	0.2778	2015	36	18/18	1.9421	0.3333
34. Krasnodar	2012.10	100	50/50	1.3252	0.9400	2017	70	35/35	1.4418	0.9714
35. Krasnoyarsk	2011.12	52	26/22*	3.0036	0.3636	2016	52	26/22*	2.7713	0.0000
36. Kurgan	2010.03	34	17/17	2.7049	0.5294	2015	34	17/17	1.8734	0.5294
37. Kursk	2011.03	45	23/22	2.4354	0.5455	2016	45	22/23	2.1326	0.7391

38. Leningrad Oblast	2011.12	50	25/25	3.1400	0.0000	2016	50	25/25	2.0555	0.5600
39. Lipetsk	2011.12	56	28/28	2.8966	0.2857	2016	56	28/28	1.8407	0.4643
40. Magadan	2010.10	21	11/10	2.1077	0.6000	2015	21	11/10	1.7996	0.9000
41. Marii El	2009.10	52	26/26	1.5688	0.6538	2014	52	26/26	1.4746	0.6154
42. Mordoviya	2011.12	48	24/24	1.0939	0.9583	2016	48	24/24	1.2000	0.9583
43. Moscow	2009.10	35	18/17	1.4724	0.8235	2014	45	0/45		0.2222
44. Moscow Oblast	2011.12	50	25/25	3.1859	0.0400	2016	50	25/25	2.1786	0.0000
45. Murmansk	2011.12	36	18/18	3.2997	0.0556	2016	32	16/16	2.5434	0.0625
46. Nenets AO	2009.03	11	11/0	2.5887		2014	19	11/8	2.4595	0.2500
47. Nizhegorod Oblast	2011.03	50	25/25	2.6014	0.2000	2016	50	25/25	1.8292	0.6400
48. North Ossetiya	2012.10	70	35/35	2.3804	0.5143	2017	70	70/0	1.7744	
49. Novgorod	2011.12	26	13/13	3.0122	0.0769	2016	32	16/16	2.7165	0.1875
50. Novosibirsk	2010.10	76	38/38	2.4779	0.2632	2015	76	38/38	2.3560	0.3421
51. Omsk	2011.12	44	22/22	2.8196	0.4091	2016	44	22/22	2.8831	0.2273
52. Orenburg	2011.03	47	24/23	2.6808	0.1739	2016	47	24/23	2.6120	0.1739
53. Oryol	2011.12	50	25/25	2.7079	0.3600	2016	50	25/25	2.4150	0.6000
54. Penza	2012.10	36	18/18	1.3451	0.7222	2017	36	18/18	1.4557	0.8333
55. Perm	2011.12	60	30/30	2.8309	0.5000	2016	60	30/30	2.4117	0.4000
56. Primorsky krai	2011.12	40	20/20	3.2653	0.1500	2016	40	20/20	2.8752	0.1000
57. Pskov	2011.12	44	22/22	3.1938	0.1818	2016	44	22/22	2.5922	0.4545
58. Rostov	2008.03	50	25/25	1.4340	0.8800	2013	60	30/30	1.5651	0.7667
59. Ryazan	2010.03	36	18/18	2.1176	0.5556	2015	36	18/18	1.6134	0.8333
60. Sakhalin	2012.10	28	14/14	1.9363	0.2857	2017	28	14/14	2.0933	0.0714
61. Samara	2011.12	50	25/25	2.6870	0.2400	2016	50	25/25	1.9920	0.4400
62. Saratov	2012.10	45	23/22	1.2422	0.9545	2017	45	23/22	1.5260	0.6818
63. Smolensk	2007.12	48	24/22*	2.1517	0.3182	2013	48	24/24	2.5609	0.2500
64. St Petersburg	2011.12	50	50/0	3.2264		2016	50	25/25	3.0030	0.2000
65. Stavropol	2011.12	50	25/25	2.2890	0.6800	2016	50	25/25	1.9758	0.5600
66. Sverdlovsk Oblast	2011.12	50	25/25	3.2263	0.0800	2016	50	25/25	2.5866	0.2000
67. Tambov	2011.03	50	25/25	1.5874	0.8000	2016	50	25/25	1.7377	0.7600
68. Tatarstan	2009.03	100	50/50	1.2714	0.9400	2014	100	50/50	1.1535	1.0000
69. Tomsk	2011.12	42	21/21	2.8602	0.3333	2016	42	21/21	2.5218	0.4286
70. Tula	2009.10	48	48/0	1.8940		2014	38	19/19	1.4641	0.9474
71. Tuva	2010.10	32	16/16	1.2716	0.8750	2014	32	16/16	1.1320	0.9375
72. Tver	2011.03	40	20/20	2.7989	0.2500	2016	40	20/20	2.3118	0.2500
73. Tyumen	2011.12	48	24/24	1.9886	0.5833	2016	48	24/24	1.8814	0.7500
74. Udmurtiya	2012.10	90	45/45	1.8428	0.4222	2017	60	30/30	1.6118	0.4667
75. Ulyanovsk	2008.03	30	15/15	1.6957	0.6000	2013	36	18/18	1.5751	0.3889
76. Vladimir	2009.03	38	19/19	2.1139	0.2632	2013	38	19/19	2.0459	0.2632
77. Volgograd	2009.03	38	22/16	2.2207	0.3750	2014	38	19/19	1.6101	0.2105
78. Vologda	2011.12	34	17/17	3.2014	0.1176	2016	34	17/17	2.7876	0.1176
79. Voronezh	2010.03	56	28/28	1.6709	0.5714	2015	56	28/28	1.3621	0.5357
80. Yakutiya	2008.03	70	35/35	2.2157	0.3143	2013	70	35/35	2.0483	0.4857
81. Yamalo-Nenets AO	2010.03	22	11/11	1.5864	0.8182	2015	22	11/11	1.4400	0.7273

82. Yaroslavl	2008.03	50	25/25	1.9323	0.2400	2013	50	25/25	2.2128	0.2400
83. Zabaikal'skii krai	2008.10	50	25/20*	2.0252	0.2500	2013	50	25/25	2.2763	0.2800

* Some special cases with MMDs: Chukotka – two 3-member districts; Irkutsk - one 4-member district; Khanty-Mansi AO – one special 3-member district to guarantee the representation of the indigenous population; Krasnoyarsk kray - two 2-member districts; Smolensk – one 2-member district; Zabaikal'skii kray - one 5-member district.

Table 2. Results of the PLPR Contests in Regional Assemblies (general for all the regions)

	1 st cycle	2 nd cycle
ENPgol average value	2.193	2.027
Total number of seats	2225	2105
UR seats	1346 (60.49%)	1403 (66.65%)
CPRF seats	382	297
JR seats	243	160
LDPR seats	206	201
Minor parties' seats (in sum)	48 (2.12%)	44 (2.09%)

Table 3. Number of seats won by parties in the SMDs and competitiveness of the elections (general for all regions)

	1 st cycle	2 nd cycle
Number SDMs	1740	1766
Non-Competitive SMDs	807	792
Share of Non-Competitive SMDs	0,4638	0,4485
Total number of UR candidates	1680	1688
UR candidates won	1474	1582
including Non-Competitive SMDs	762 (51.7%)	752 (47.5%)
UR candidates lost	206	106
including Non-Competitive SMDs	19 (9.2%)	12 (11.3%)
UR didn't nominate candidates	60	78
including Non-Competitive SMDs	26 (43.3%)	28 (35.9%)
CPRF candidates won	73	41
JR candidates won	51	24
LDPR candidates won	6	14
Other parties candidates won	10	22
Non-party candidates won	126	83

Figure 1. Scatter Diagram for the 1st cycle of regional assembly elections

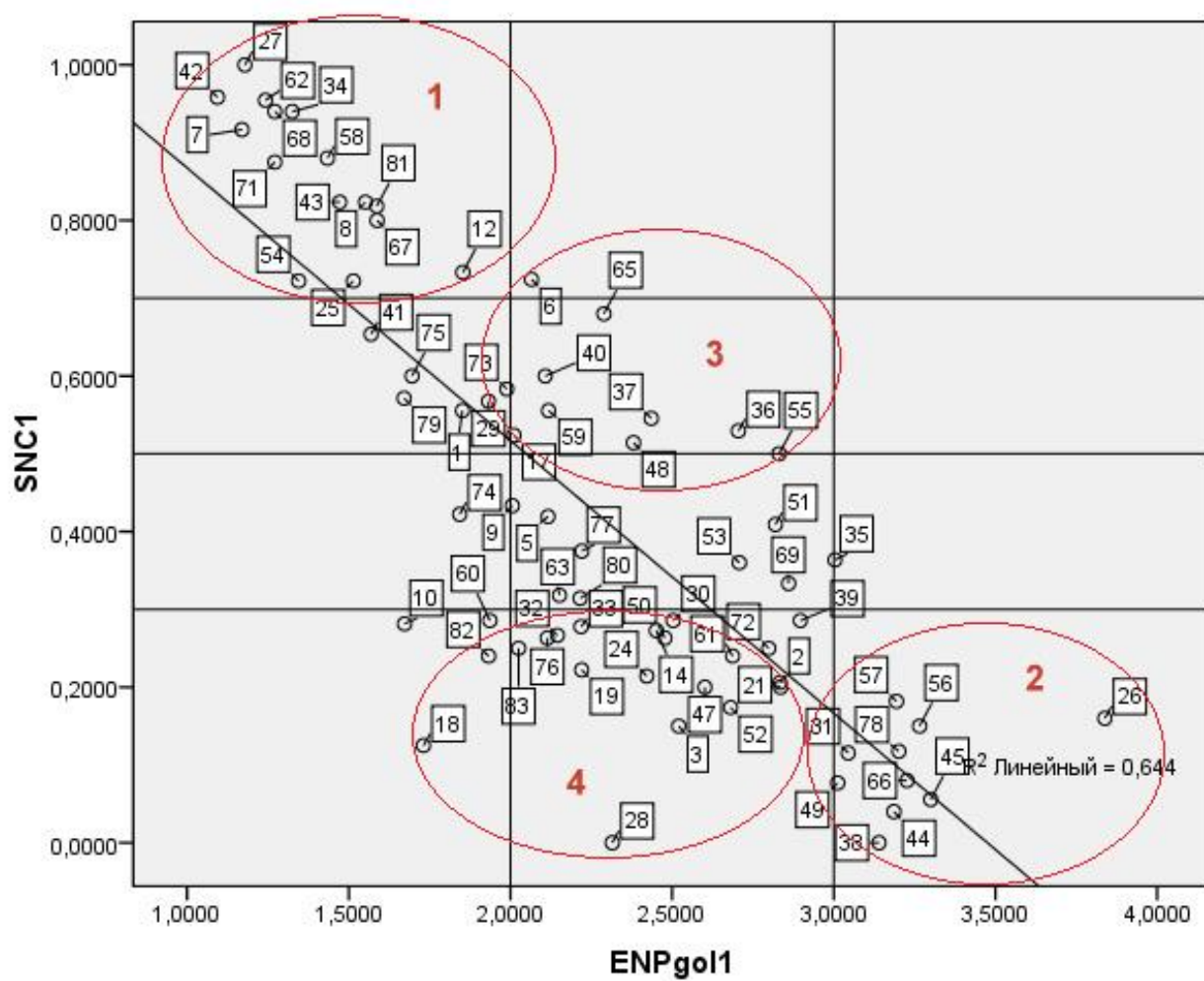


Figure 2. Scatter Diagram for the 2nd cycle of regional assemblies' elections

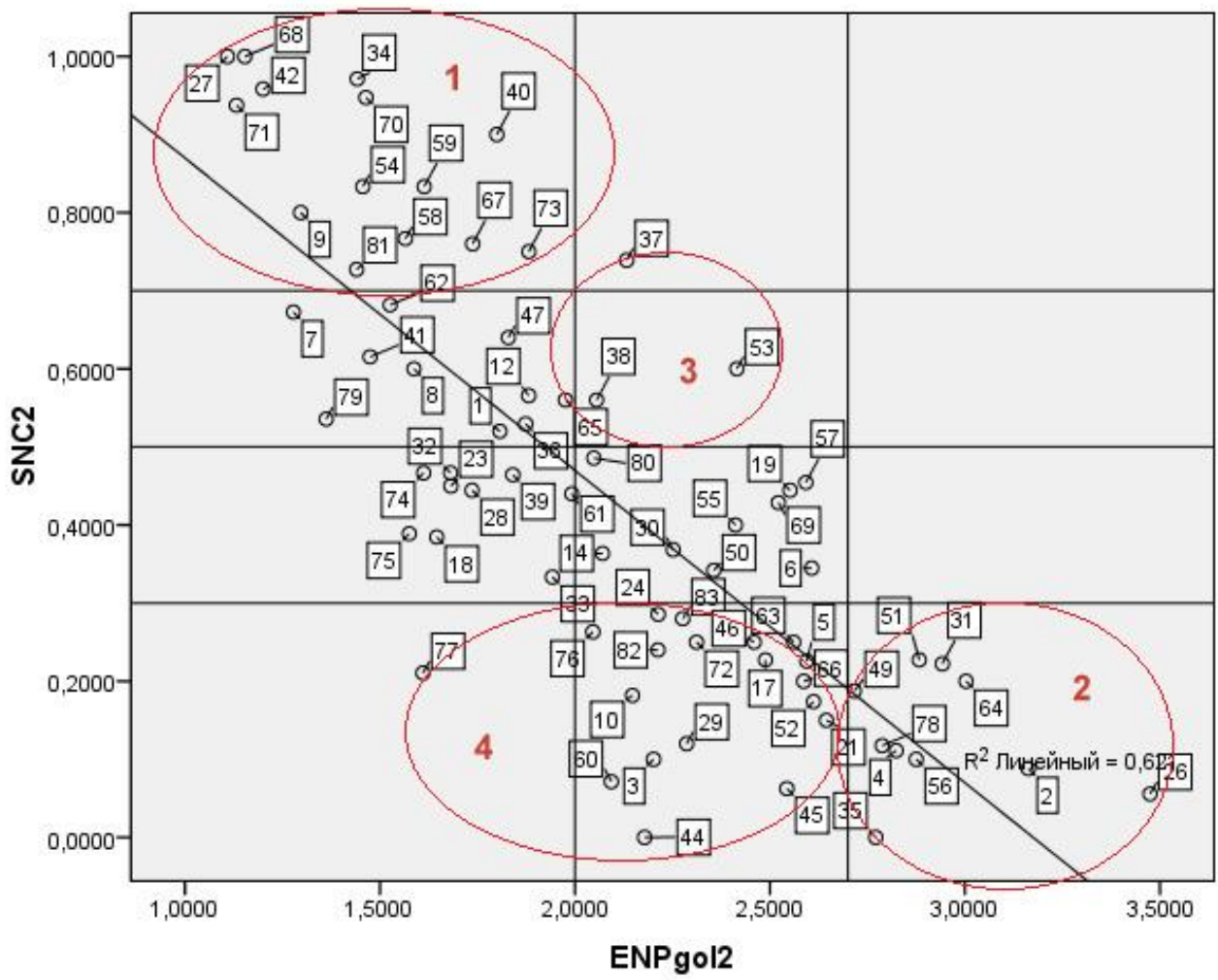


Table 4. Regions with stable patterns of electoral competitiveness

“Hegemonic authoritarian” – 19 regions	Kemerovo (27), Mordoviya (42), Tatarstan (68), Krasnodar (34), Tuva (71), Rostov (58), Yamalo Nenets AO (81), Tambov (67), Penza (54), Chechnya (11), Ingushetiya (16), Kabardino-Balkariya (20), Dagestan (15), Chukotka (13), Karachaevo-Cherkessiya (25), Tula (70), Saratov (62), Bashkortostan (7), Tyumen (73)
“Clearly-competitive authoritarian” – 9 regions	Novgorod (49), Kirov (31), Vologda (78), Primorsky Kray (56), Kareliya (26), St Petersburg (64), Murmansk (45), Sverdlovsk (66), Altay krai (2)
“Semi-hegemonic authoritarian” – 2 regions	Kursk (37), Stavropol (65)
“Moderately-competitive authoritarian” – 14 regions	Altay republic (3), Buryatiya (10), Kaliningrad (21), Kamchatka (24), Orenburg (52), Vladimir (76), Tver (72), Sakhalin (60), Yaroslavl (82), Zabaikal'skii krai (83), Novosibirsk (50), Khanty-Mansi AO (30), Smolensk (63), Nenets AO (46)

Table 5. Results of the Regression Analyses (values of B coefficients; St.er. in parenthesis)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	ENP	CompSMD	ENP* CompSM D	ENP	CompSMD	ENP* CompSMD
Constanta	0,769* (0,447)	-0,228*** (0,304)	-1,200 (0,948)	0,808 (0,427)	-0,367 (0,280)	-1,424 (0,893)
Russians	0,934*** (0,269)	0,487*** (0,172)	1,513*** (0,532)	1,038*** (0,245)	0,575*** (0,141)	1,755*** (0,441)
Urban	0,605 (0,569)	0,260 (0,295)	0,978 (0,944)	0,475 (0,577)	0,345 (0,293)	0,982 (0,968)
Poverty	1,411 (1,255)	1,403* (0,810)	4,038 (2,508)	1,272 (1,111)	1,497** (0,677)	4,164* (2,113)
R-square	0,243	0,140	0,148	0,334	0,267	,257
Significance	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01					